

Amendment

U.S. Patent Application No. 10/073,037

REMARKS

Claims 1-17, 24-38, 43-49, 51, 52, 54, 55, and 57 are pending in the subject application. Claims 1-18, 24-38, and 43-57 have been examined: claims 1-12, 16-18, 24-33, 49, 52, and 55 stand rejected; claims 34-38 and 43-48 are allowed; and claims 13-15, 50, 51, 53, 54, 56, and 57 are indicated as containing allowable subject matter. By the above amendments, claims 18, 50, 53, and 56 have been canceled, and claims 1, 12, 13, 15, and 24 have been amended. Favorable reconsideration of the application and allowance of all of the pending claims are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for allowing claims 34 – 38 and 43 – 48.

Claims 1-12, 16-18, 24-33, 49, 52, and 55 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,233,626 to Ames in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,446,924 to Christian. Independent claims 1, 12, and 24 have been amended to include the subject matter of allowable dependent claims 50, 53, and 56, respectively. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 1-12, 16-18, 24-33, 49, 52, and 55 over Ames and Christian.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to find the application to be in condition for allowance with claims 1-17, 24-38, 43-49, 51, 52, 54, 55, and 57. However, if for any reason the Examiner feels that the application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney to discuss any unresolved issues and to expedite the disposition of the application.

Amendment

U.S. Patent Application No. 10/073,037

Filed concurrently herewith is a Petition (with payment) for an extension of time of one month. Applicant hereby petitions for any extension of time which may be required to maintain the pendency of this case, and any required fee for such extension is to be charged to Deposit Account No. 05-0460.

Respectfully submitted,



Patrick J. Finnegan
Registration No. 39,189

EDELL, SHAPIRO & FINNAN, LLC
1901 Research Boulevard, Suite 400
Rockville, Maryland 20850-3164
(301) 424-3640

Hand Delivered on: 5/8/06